For students looking for a **summer ‘A’** course that is **online, exciting, and easy to manage**, I am offering **REL 3100 (ONLINE) INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION AND CULTURE**. Please register before all the seats are taken. This class fills fast.

- Professor: Albert Wuaku

**Course Description:**
This very exciting six-week online course explores religion from sociological and anthropological perspectives. While the emphasis is on American society, past and present, we will also learn about how religion and politics, societal life, conflict, and gender issues etc. interact in other, especially, nonwestern societies. Specifically, students will examine the ways in which sociologists and anthropologists try to explain the phenomenon of religion [that is, religious beliefs, religious behavior, and religious institutions] and how these socio-anthropological views are played out on the religious landscapes of America and other global societies. The course exposes students to a range of sociological and anthropological theories that explore the origins of religion as a social and cultural phenomenon, and interrogate the interplay between religious belief, ritual, and religious institutions and their social and cultural contexts. Note that this is not a course in theology! We will not focus much attention on the content of beliefs and practices of specific religious traditions. Our interest is in the social and cultural dimensions of the phenomenon of religion. Why are human beings religious? Why do people change religions? Will religion sponsored violence ever go away? How does a cult differ from a sect? Are cults really dangerous to society, and how? How does religion promote or retard material progress? These are some of the intriguing issues we will explore in this course.

Course Objectives:

This course has four objectives:

- To introduce students to socio-cultural concepts relevant to the understanding of religion as a dimension of societal life;
- To examine the dynamics of the relationship between religion and other aspects of society such as politics and the economy;
- To develop critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating theoretical perspectives on religious belief and action; and
- To encourage students to apply socio-anthropological concepts in the understanding of their personal religious lives and past and contemporary religious issues in their societies.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester students will:

- Gain an intellectual understanding of the interconnection between religion and society in western and nonwestern cultures;
- To improve on their writing skills through the writing of essays;
- To develop the culture of participating in intellectual conversations through the interchanges discussion questions require of them; and
- To be excited about the dynamics of religion in societal life enough to want to pursue studies in this area further.

Textbook:

Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion by Ronald L. Johnstone
You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

Content:
**Discussion Forums:**

Throughout the semester the instructor will post messages to the discussion board that require a response or activity from each student. Each post will be graded. Each discussion is worth 25 points. To receive all possible points, a posting must be on time, be easy to read, free of careless mistakes, and appropriately address the issue(s) or question(s) presented by the instructor. Also each student must address or respond to viewpoints of at least three others in the class.

Keep in mind that forum discussions are public, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

**Assignments:**

The essay questions will be based on the lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings. The purpose of these essays is to test the student's knowledge of the vocabulary, issues, theoretical perspectives and the ability to apply the ideas covered to the understanding of lived religious experience.

**How to respond to essay questions:**

All essay questions must be thoroughly answered. A thorough response is one that shows evidence of familiarity with the text and the power-point notes and shows the student’s own originality. The points in the essay must be discussed thoroughly and illustrated with practical examples from the readings or the author’s own experiences. The essay must be written in grammatically correct prose. It must be very well structured and organized. **YOU WILL SCORE A ZERO IF YOU SUBMIT WORK THAT IS POORLY WRITTEN.**

Read the questions ahead of time. Read the text and power point notes and draft your responses. Read the question again to make sure you are on the right course. Proof read your work before you submit it.

**Quizzes:**

There will be a multiple choice quiz or essay assignment after each topic or combination of topics. Each assignment will be worth a total of 25 points. Each essay assignment will consist of 1, 2, 3 or 4 essay questions out of which a student will be required to answer a specified number of questions. If the chosen question has sub-divisions [e.g. questions 1 a, 1 b, etc.] the student must address all questions in the subdivisions to be awarded full points for the question. A student has only 3 attempts at answering the multiple choice questions. The highest score will be recorded.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements.

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](https://www.fiu.edu/online-supportservices).
Final Grade:

The Final Grade will be determined by a tally of points scored throughout the semester. These points will be converted into percentages [that is, Points scored by student/total number of points [200] x 100]. Please keep printed copies of all assignments and graded material. If you cannot produce your class material in a grade dispute, the grade recorded in the instructor's grade book will take precedent.

Students are required and responsible for all assigned text readings and material from Blackboard. Students are expected to check the Announcement and Assignment sections of Blackboard for this class at least every other day. Students who take this course are expected to have the skills necessary to complete all assignments. Essay Assignments must not be sent as attachments to the professor. They must be posted in the Assignment drop box. I will not grade them if you send them to me as attachments. If you have computer technology questions during the semester, you should contact the FIU Computer Help Desk.

Note: I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if and whenever necessary.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays and Multiple Choice Quizzes</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Assignments</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Above 95</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83 - 86</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 - 76</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 94</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 - 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 or Less</td>
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Weekly Schedule:

Lecture summaries and supplementary material will be located in corresponding weekly folder.

Date, Chapter and Tasks

Week 1

May 8-14

Chapter 1 - Introduction to Sociology of Religion. Chapter 2 - The sources of Religion.

Week 2

May 15-21

Chapter 3 - Religion as a Group Phenomenon Chapter 5 - Becoming Religious
Week 3
May 22-May 28th

NOTE: May 29th is Memorial Day Holiday (University Closed)

Chapter 4 - The Church/Sect Continuum (Churches, Sects, Cults, and Denominations)

Essay 1 due May 28th at 11:55p.m.

Week 4
May 30th-June 4th

Chapter 6 - Religion and Conflict. Chapter 9 - Religion and the Economy. Essay 2 due June 4 at 11:55p.m.

Week 5
June 5-11

Chapter 8 – Religious Fundamentalism. Documentary – “Made in America – Christian Fundamentalism”

Date Chapter and Tasks -- Essay 3 due June 11th at 11:55p.m.

Week 6
June 12-16

Chapter 11 – Religion And Women Discussion Board 2 posts due June 16 at 11:55p.m. Quiz 3 due June 16th at 11:55p.m.